

## Social Media Marketing part 4 - Twitter

Some people love it, some people hate it, and some people just don't get it. That's how most people feel about Twitter. As a social media platform it's one of the new kids on the block having been around since 2006. Twitter was listed on the stock market in sept 2013.

### Setting up your Twitter account

Setting up a twitter account is relatively straightforward. To start off building an optimised profile you should do the following steps:

1. **Select a great twitter name.**

Generally this should be your brand name or something equally applicable. Try to keep your username short, simple and memorable. This username will form part of your twitter url, and will be included on your marketing material, so if you want to use 'free therapists' as your username, just be aware that it might also be read as 'free the rapists' (@freetherapists). Twitter will allow you to change your username as often as you like if you decide you need to, but try to avoid as this can affect marketing materials or backlinks.

2. **Write a great bio.**

Your 160 character twitter profile will probably appear quite high up when people search for your brand name, so your bio is very important. Include who you are, what you do and why people should follow you in this bio. If you are setting up a company twitter account (which in contrast to Facebook and LinkedIn does not differ in any way from a personal account) it's useful to include the name of the person managing the account as this makes it more personal. You can also include your company website URL in the bio if you have space. Try to keep the bio informal and fun to reflect Twitter's conversational nature.

3. **Use an effective profile image.**

Your profile picture will appear everywhere on twitter (and outside twitter in embedded feeds) so it's important that the image reflects your company. It does not always have to be a logo, it can be an object representative of your company, for example, a bike wheel, or maybe even a photo of the person managing the account. Twitter profiles with the default avatars are generally viewed as less trustworthy. To update your profile image, click on 'edit profile' at the right hand side of your profile page and then click on your image which should say 'change your profile photo' on the top of it. Your profile image should be 400 x 400px.

4. **Add a header image.**

In 2014, twitter added the ability for people to add custom header images to their profiles. This is a large 1500 x 500 image that goes across the width of the page. You can use this image to add iconography, or a relevant photo or even include text in the image. Whatever you add will not be visible to mobile phone users (which makes up the majority of Twitter). The procedure to change your header image is similar to changing the profile image but instead of clicking on your photo, just click on the 'add a header photo' link in the top centre area.

And that's all you need to do to get started. Twitter is a lot simpler and more streamlined than other social networks and takes very little time to learn. The hardest thing you need to learn is how to

communicate your messages in less than 160 characters.

### Future of Twitter

In May 2015, Twitter had more than 500 million users, over half of which are active users. However growth in Twitter has not kept up with investor expectations and on June 10 2015, its CEO Dick Costolo stepped down. This leaves Twitter's future direction uncertain. Apparently they are working on a curated news experience to try to engage "casual and unregistered users" called 'project lightning'.

Project lightning is designed to address one of the 2 fundamental flaws in twitter (the other being the low revenue on mobile advertising). The problem is that using Twitter is a very immediate experience with no short term memory. In other words, using Twitter is a bit like having a conversation with a dog using a dog translator. You cannot ask questions like 'what happened yesterday' or 'why did you just salivate at hearing that bell?' because it won't be able to tell you. It will just sit looking at you blankly wagging its #tail. All you can do is find out what people are saying now. This can give you the feeling that you've just walked into the middle of a conversation without knowing what the conversation is about.

So to engage people using twitter you need to use messages that do not relate to previous knowledge. Assume everyone has just joined the conversation.